

# Blue Grass *exchange*

A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

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### Fall 2004

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#### Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office

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#### Blue Grass Chemical Activity Public Affairs Office

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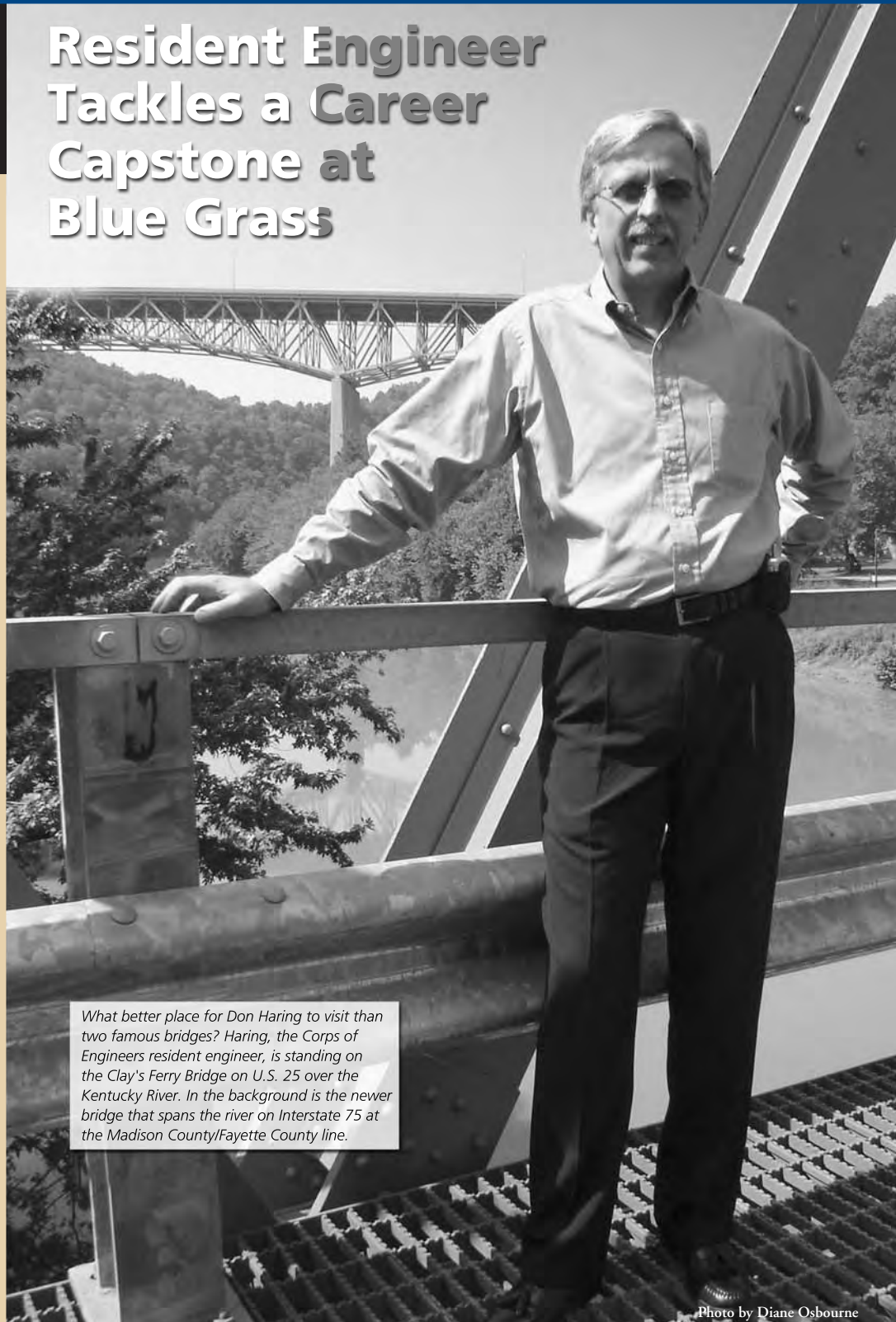
#### Bechtel Parsons Public Involvement Office

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Blue Grass Chemical Agent-  
Destruction Pilot Plant

www.pmacwa.army.mil



*What better place for Don Haring to visit than two famous bridges? Haring, the Corps of Engineers resident engineer, is standing on the Clay's Ferry Bridge on U.S. 25 over the Kentucky River. In the background is the newer bridge that spans the river on Interstate 75 at the Madison County/Fayette County line.*

Photo by Diane Osbourne

# Resident Engineer Tackles a Career Capstone at Blue Grass



“My job is to make sure we turn out the best product we can within budget and on schedule with the highest degree of safety,” said Don Haring, speaking of efforts to destroy the toxic chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot.

Now, after 29 years of government service working on progressively larger dollar value and complex programs, the Texas native knows that another capstone of his career will one day make the world a safer place. Haring has recently joined the Blue Grass project as the resident engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

While the effort to destroy Kentucky’s stockpile of aging chemical weapons moves methodically through the design phase, environmental permitting processes, program reviews and public participation activities, Haring speaks optimistically of the program’s success with personal conviction.

After all, he managed construction of the Umatilla, Ore., chemical agent disposal facility and other projects in Alaska, Texas and Europe.

Haring started with the Corps of Engineers in the Galveston District and then moved on to the Fort Worth District in San Antonio. After spending three years in Germany, Haring went back to San Antonio, where he worked as the chief of the technical and construction branches for the Brooke Army Medical Center. In 1997 he moved to Oregon to serve as the chief of the technical support and quality assurance branch and the assistant resident engineer for the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility. Under

Haring’s construction engineering guidance and supervision, the Corps of Engineers managed construction, equipment installation and pre-commissioning of the Umatilla disposal facility. That took about five years and \$500 million. “The work at Umatilla gave me an understanding of all of the different players involved in the chemical weapons destruction effort and the need for a lot of coordination and teamwork,” Haring said. The work was fast-paced and intensive. There were 1,000 workers working two shifts during 20-hour days.

Most recently, Haring was the resident engineer for the ground-based midcourse defense program at Fort Greely, Alaska.

Given his extensive experience at Umatilla, it was perhaps natural that, when the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant project started in Richmond, Haring took the role of Blue Grass resident engineer.

“Safety” is a word that crops up regularly in discussions with Haring. An important ingredient to the success of any construction project, it’s a point of pride for an undertaking of this size and scope. With the design 30 percent complete, the systems contractor, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, has worked 445 days without a single lost workday accident.

According to Haring, the scope of a project this size and driven by something as critical as the destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile demands that “everyone be on the same team.”

“It requires a balancing act with the needs of the customer (the Program Manager for


Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives), regulatory agencies, and the public,” he said. And it requires coordination and communication with numerous government agencies as well as a large contractor work force. “The Blue Grass project will be able to gain from the historical knowledge and lessons learned from all of the other chemical demilitarization projects in the United States that the Corps of Engineers has worked on,” Haring said. “This will help us do things smarter.”

The need for protection of the environment and public health and the necessity for absolute safety meant Haring faced regular audits and reviews at Umatilla. He passed every one. “Each project is different and has its own technical challenges. We learn to resolve them in a collaborative environment,” Haring said.

Haring’s efforts in the chemical demilitarization program have been a source of pride. Despite controversy associated with the program, Haring remains optimistic. He is confident that when the last chemical munition is destroyed, everyone will know that he kept the public interest at heart.

“Safety is important to the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass Team and to everyone involved in the project,” Haring said. “And we are off to a great start.”

### Economic Impact of BGCAPP



\$602,006	Small businesses
\$240,204	Large businesses
<b>\$842,215</b>	<b>Total dollars spent to date</b>
\$183,783	Small disadvantaged
\$172,054	Woman-owned
\$43,877	Veteran-owned
\$215,000	Local



## Project Manager's Update

# Project Completes First Year with Excellent Safety Record and Significant Progress

By CHRIS MIDGETT,  
Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass Project Manager

One year has passed since the contract award for the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass Team, and it has been an exciting time for all involved in the project. We have made significant progress toward our mission of "safely and efficiently destroying the chemical weapons stockpile stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot."

The totally open, honest and transparent collaboration among work elements, teaming partners, government and the community has been the hallmark of our success to date.

The project has worked over 445 days without a lost workday incident or even a first-aid case. We held a celebration to honor an accident-free first year. This perfect record shows the personal commitment of all team members to incorporate a "zero accident" philosophy into everyday work efforts.

We started the project with 13 employees. Today there are over 200 employees. Most of the employees continue the design work in Pasadena, Calif., but more than 30 employees call Kentucky home, including myself.

I would like to welcome the newest member of the team, Tom McCabe, who has been named deputy project manager. He comes to us from his position as project manager for Parsons on a U.S. Navy project to clean up unexploded ordinance on the

island of Kaho'olawe, Hawaii. Prior to that assignment, Tom worked on the Russian chemical demilitarization program, the U.S. chemical weapons disposal alternative technology program and on design of

validate the process design concept and to provide a facilities footprint.

As the design moves forward, we begin to prepare for construction. Requests for proposals on the subcontract work for the

access road off Highway 52, fencing, and site preparation will be solicited from September through November, with construction expected to begin in early 2005. Construction for the main facility is still scheduled for the fall of 2005.

The Research and Development Demonstration environmental permit application, submitted to the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection, or KDEP, in March is available for review and public comment. KDEP is continuing to evaluate the application and meets regularly with project representatives during the review process. The initial air permit application has been submitted to the

government for review, and the target for submission to KDEP is September 21. Each of these environmental permits moves us forward to starting construction and operating the facilities.

Funding for programs can be tenuous, especially with the understandable pressures on the government in a wartime situation. Assuming that funds will be available, and given the past performance demonstrated by the team, I am certain we will be able to meet our schedule. Our success thus far sets the standard for the coming years.



Photo by Sandra Plant

Guests at the August community roundtable luncheon were the county judge-executives of Madison and surrounding counties. From left to right, Col. Martin Jacoby; Chris Midgett (with back to camera); Sandra Varellas, judge-executive of Fayette County; Kent Clark, judge-executive of Madison County; George Carloftis, judge-executive of Rockcastle County; Fred Rogers (in foreground), emergency management director of Estill County; Jim Fritsche and Lt. Col. George Shuplinkov.



Photo by Diane Osbourne

Tom McCabe, new deputy project manager for Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass.

baseline incineration chemical demilitarization facilities. Tom replaces Karl Burchett, who was selected by his corporate management to be chief operating officer on a project in Utah. We wish Karl well in his new career opportunity.

The design phase is now more than 30 percent complete. This initial design plan sets the stage to allow us to move forward with more detailed design work. We recently conducted a four-day, 3D model review for the government and other stakeholders covering process design and facilities and site layouts. The 3D model will be used to

## New Commander Takes Charge of Blue Grass Chemical Activity

Lt. Col. George Shuplinkov, the new commander of the Blue Grass Chemical Activity, assumed command in a ceremony held recently at Blue Grass Army Depot.

In that ceremony, Shuplinkov accepted responsibility for the safe and secure storage and monitoring of the chemical weapons stockpile located on the depot. The Blue Grass Chemical Activity is a tenant Army unit on the Blue Grass Army Depot, which is one of eight chemical weapons storage sites within the United States.

Michael A. Parker, director of the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency, presented the unit flag of the Chemical Activity to the new commander. Parker challenged Shuplinkov to “protect the workforce, the community and the environment.”

After a two-year tour of duty at the depot, the departing commander, Lt. Col. Dennis Cantwell, handed over the unit flag to Parker. Cantwell, who is being deployed to a new assignment in Belgium, spoke highly of his successor. “George is going to take this activity to a new level,” he said.

Shuplinkov, whose career as an officer in the U.S. Army spans 19 years, brings both enthusiasm and experience to his new command. He says he really believes in the warrior ethos that the Army instills in its leaders. “I am all green,” he says proudly, and it is obvious that he means Army green.

After serving in the Reserve Officer Training Program, he received his commission through the ROTC program at Johns Hopkins University and graduated from the University of Maryland in 1985 with a B.S. in biology. His military education includes the Chemical Officer Basic and the Advanced Course. He also completed the Combined Arms and Services Staff School. While attending the U.S. Air Force Command and General Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama, he also earned a master’s degree in international studies.



*Lt. Col. George Shuplinkov, at left, greets guests following his change of command ceremony. Here he welcomes Dr. Robert Miller, Citizens' Advisory Commission member. In background at right is Laura Roenker, command group attorney, and Col. Martin Jacoby, commander of the Blue Grass Army Depot.*

His first tour on active duty was with the Third Ranger Battalion, where he participated in Operation Just Cause in Panama. Additionally, Shuplinkov has completed two tours of duty in Iraq, first in Operation Desert Storm with the VII Corps, where he trained and prepared troops for possible chemical warfare attacks, and in Operation Iraqi Freedom with the V Corps, where his mission was to search for weapons of mass destruction.

The new commander says he looks forward to the challenge of his duty at the Blue Grass Chemical Activity. He is also looking forward to being a “proud member of the community. My family and I like it here,” he said.

His family includes his wife Susanne, two sons, ages 14 and 12, and a daughter, age 9.

## Four Local Students Awarded Scholarships

Congratulations to the four students selected to receive the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass corporately funded scholarships. Scholarship recipients are Courtney Thacher, Berea Community High School; Joseph Knuckles, Madison Southern High School; Emily Ricketts, Madison Central High School; and Genna Vescio, Model Laboratory High School. Each student will receive a \$1,000 scholarship for educational expenses at Eastern Kentucky University. A reception was held recently at the project office for the students and their families. Students met with project staff, who offered encouragement for a successful first year in college.



*From Left, Courtney Thacher, Genna Vescio, Joseph Knuckles, and Emily Ricketts*

## Project *News Briefs*

### Project Information on the Web

Looking for information on chemical weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot? Here are some sources of information on the World Wide Web.

- Program Manager for Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, [www.pmacwa.army.mil](http://www.pmacwa.army.mil). This Web site provides fact sheets, brochures, posters, reports and other program information related to the safe destruction of chemical weapons.
- Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, [www.bechtelparsonsbgcapp.com](http://www.bechtelparsonsbgcapp.com). This Web site provides information about the project to local stakeholders — with special emphasis on information for suppliers and potential employees. The site also has a number of links that can send the reader to other chemical weapons demilitarization sites or Web sites of project teaming partners.

### EKU Senior Enjoys Co-Op at Project Office

Brooke Ratliff joined the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass Team this summer as a co-op student serving as an administrative services specialist. Ratliff, a Corbin native, is a senior communications major at Eastern Kentucky University. She enjoyed her experience so much she asked to continue through the fall semester.

Ratliff has implemented several successful projects during her co-op. She devised a system for ordering supplies and employed a green room concept for recycling supplies. However, her most challenging project was the virtual war room, a Web-based “bulletin board” for quick reference of important documents. Ratliff feels empowered by the flexibility she has been given with projects. “I am able to make decisions about how to do things, and am able to get more out of it,” she said.

The highlight for Ratliff has been her recent trip to Pasadena, Calif. She spent approximately two weeks providing administrative support and observing contract negotiations with the government. While initially nervous about leaving her home and her dog, Bailey, she knows the opportunity has given her real-life experience in the importance of communication skills.

“Brooke’s flexibility and attention to detail were invaluable as she supported the recent early construction negotiations held in Pasadena,” said Robert Rudd, prime contract manager, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass.



Brooke Ratliff

Photo by Diane Osbourne

### CDCAB and CAC to Meet October 4

The Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) will meet Monday, Oct. 4, at the Perkins Building on the campus of Eastern Kentucky University from 1–5 p.m. The CDCAB is a diverse group of community leaders that organized to represent the views and concerns of all sectors of the local community on issues regarding Kentucky’s chemical weapons disposal program. The co-chairs are Madison County Judge-Executive Kent Clark and Craig Williams, director of the Chemical Weapons Working Group. To review the minutes of the July 12 CDCAB meeting, log on to the PMACWA Web site at [www.pmacwa.army.mil](http://www.pmacwa.army.mil).

For more information on the CDCAB, contact Jill Abner at (859) 626-8944, or e-mail [outreach@bechtel.com](mailto:outreach@bechtel.com).

The Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens’ Advisory Commission (CAC) will meet immediately following the CDCAB meeting. The CAC is a group of citizens appointed by the governor to solicit input from citizens of Madison and surrounding counties regarding chemical weapons disposal. For more information on the CAC meeting, contact Valerie Merlin, CAC secretary, at (859) 625-1528. The e-mail address is [kycac@iclub.org](mailto:kycac@iclub.org).

### Speakers Available for Civic and Educational Meetings

If your organization needs a speaker to make a presentation and answer questions about any aspect of the chemical weapons destruction process, please call the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (859) 626-8944 or make your request by e-mail at [outreach@bechtel.com](mailto:outreach@bechtel.com). Speakers are available from any of the project partners, including the Blue Grass Army Depot, the Blue Grass Chemical Activity, Program Manager Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, or any of the teaming partners of Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass.

### Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass Launches Teacher Program

Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass is accepting applications for the corporately funded Teacher Innovation Grant Program. Madison County teachers of science, mathematics and technology, grades 1–12, are eligible to apply. Up to 20 grants of \$500 each will be awarded to teachers demonstrating innovative approaches for classroom learning. The application deadline is Sept. 30. For more information, please contact Diane Osbourne at (859) 624-6204 or visit our Web site: [www.bechtelparsonsbgcapp.com](http://www.bechtelparsonsbgcapp.com).



## Ask Jim Fritsche

# New Site Manager's Goal is to Complete Work on Schedule with Zero Accidents

After several months as Department of Defense site project manager for the Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, Jim Fritsche took time out of his busy schedule to reflect on his new job.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** Jim, welcome aboard. How does it feel to be the site manager for the Blue Grass project?

**Fritsche:** It feels a little overwhelming. But like any large project you break it down to the smaller components and deal with them, then as the components are completed you piece it all together, and you have a completed project.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** Please talk about your background in engineering, in the National Guard and at the Blue Grass Chemical Activity.

**Fritsche:** I have always enjoyed something a little different. When I worked for the state of Indiana I was responsible for doing deck repairs on a 3,000-foot bridge while maintaining traffic. With the National Guard I worked on building training facilities that could withstand both the wear and tear of soldiers and acts of God. Sometimes the soldiers provided the bigger challenge. With the chemical activity we worked on equipment improvements to include conducting operations while wearing personal protective equipment.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** How did your stint as the top civilian at the Blue Grass Chemical Activity help prepare you for this job?

**Fritsche:** I learned a lot of patience and that you have to constantly review plans and procedures to do all you can to minimize the risk to the workers and the public. You review everything both in the box and outside of the box and need to ask a lot of "what ifs."

**Blue Grass Exchange:** What do you hope to accomplish?

**Fritsche:** My goal is complete destruction of the chemical weapons stockpile on schedule and with zero accidents or incidents.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** What are your top priorities?

**Fritsche:** Safety, safety, safety. Safety is and always will be number one. I am also committed to total team involvement — government, contractor, oversight agencies, citizen boards, elected officials, etc. There should be public awareness of all aspects of the program at all times. This helps build trust and credibility while providing additional opinions and viewpoints. The perspective from others is very useful in this project.

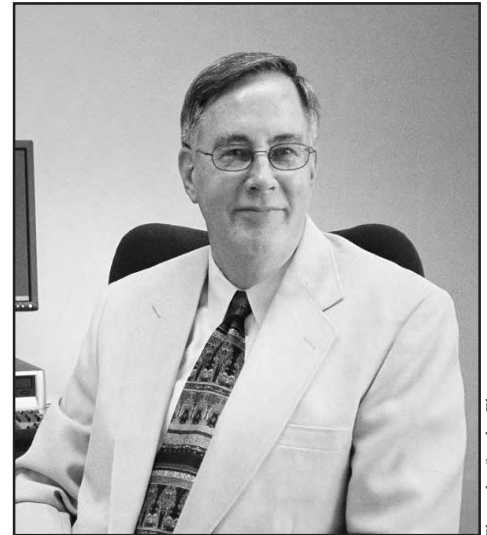
**Blue Grass Exchange:** It is obvious that you feel very strongly about safety.

**Fritsche:** I grew up in a farming community where years ago a broken bone or loss of limb or loss of life was considered part of the risk of the agricultural profession. Later in life I worked at an Army test facility where hundreds of people worked with weapons, propellants, and explosives every day. With more than 50 years of operation we had two deaths. Both of these deaths were caused by failure to follow written procedures. If you ignore safety, sooner or later you pay the price, like some of my neighbors did when I was a kid. But if you know the risk and respond with the proper protective equipment, engineering controls and respect for your situation, you can be safe in a hazardous environment. This is how we practiced safety at the chemical activity and how we plan to practice safety in all facets of the destruction effort.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** What are some of the challenges that lie ahead?

**Fritsche:** There are a lot of agencies and organizations involved in the program. One of the challenges will be communicating with all of the different players to ensure that everyone is informed of what is going on. Another challenge will be educating stakeholders on the process and what to expect down the road. The more they know, the more benefit we get from their perspective.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** As you mentioned earlier, there are many local, state, federal and



Jim Fritsche

Photo by Sandra Plant

independent organizations involved in the project. Doesn't this make your job difficult?

**Fritsche:** It actually makes my job easier because all of these organizations and people working for these organizations are working together to help us succeed in safely and efficiently destroying the stockpile. This is a unique assignment because no one wants us to perform poorly.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** What is the effect on the program of Blue Grass being the last of the chemical weapons storage sites in the United States to build a plant?

**Fritsche:** It increases the knowledge base of what works and what doesn't work well. It will also increase the labor pool of people who have experience in safely operating chemical weapons destruction facilities.

**Blue Grass Exchange:** You have been a member of this community for a number of years. What message would you like to tell our readers in the local community?

**Fritsche:** This is a very supportive community. A large majority of persons feel very comfortable with the job we have done with stockpile storage. That is a rewarding endorsement. Then there is a portion of the community that has come forward with questions, concerns and comments. That is rewarding because that causes us to rethink what we do with questions we may not have asked ourselves. This helps us constantly improve the way we do business.

**Citizen** *Exchange*

The Blue Grass Exchange is pleased to introduce a new feature entitled Citizen Exchange, which will focus on questions frequently asked by members of the community. If you have a question you would like to have answered in this section, please send it to Editor, Blue Grass Exchange, ATTN: Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, 301 Highland Park Drive, Richmond, KY 40475. You may also send questions via e-mail to [outreach@bechtel.com](mailto:outreach@bechtel.com). We hope you find this section informative and useful in understanding the efforts to safely destroy the chemical weapons at the Blue Grass Army Depot.

**Where is the project in the environmental permitting process?**

To receive an environmental permit, the Blue Grass Army Depot, the Program Manager for Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives and the Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass Team submitted a detailed permit application March 11, 2004, describing how the facility will be built and operated to comply with regulations under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Prior to submitting the permit application, the applicants held a public meeting Jan. 22 to inform the community of their intent to submit an application and to obtain comments. The Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KDEP) is reviewing the application. KDEP will generally request additional information and/or clarification, develop draft permit conditions, and issue a draft permit for public comment. During this comment period, public meetings and a public hearing will be held. After comments are received and incorporated, a final RCRA Research, Development and Demonstration permit is issued. With KDEP oversight, the applicants will conduct a pilot test of the proposed neutralization system. On the basis of the results, the applicants will decide whether to treat the remainder of the chemical weapons stockpile in the proposed neutralization system. Construction and operation of the plant can not begin until the Army is issued a permit.

**What is a Notice of Deficiency under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act?**

After receiving the permit application, KDEP may issue a Notice of Deficiency to the applicant, identifying any additional needed information and asking the applicant to

supply it. During the application and revision process, it is common for KDEP to issue several notices. Each time the permitting agency receives a response from the applicant, it reviews the information and, if necessary, issues other notices until the application is complete. Given the complex and technical nature of the information, the review and revision process may take several years.

**What are the risks to the public?**

The Army and the National Research Council (NRC) have conducted numerous studies to calculate the risk of destroying chemical weapons and the risks of storing them indefinitely. According to these risk assessments, there is a small risk connected with disposing of the chemical stockpile, but it is much lower than the risk associated with continuing to store the chemicals indefinitely. The NRC has stated that, "Delays in disposal operations can only increase the already much larger cumulative risk of accidental release from storage." This is why the Army has elected to follow the recommendations of the NRC and destroy the stockpile as safely and expeditiously as possible. While the risk during destruction operations is slight, an accident is possible, so stringent engineering controls have been put into place to mitigate risks to the workers, public and environment. Examples of engineering controls include remote operations, cascading ventilation and explosive containment rooms.

**When will plant construction begin?**

Construction of a new access gate off Kentucky State Road 52 is scheduled to begin in early 2005. Construction of the facility will not begin until a permit has been received from the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection. This is not anticipated until the fall of 2005 at the earliest.

**Where can a person obtain information on employment opportunities?**

The project is currently in the first phase of the project, known as the design phase, which is expected to last more than two years. At the end of the design phase, the project will start the construction phase, which will take at least three years. Anticipated staffing levels will peak between 600 and 1,000 employees. The exact staffing level will depend on the final design, project funding and the proposed schedule. Hiring for the Systemization, Pilot Testing and Operating Phases will begin approximately one year before construction is complete. Resumes may be sent to: Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass, Attn: Diane Claybaugh, 301 Highland Park Drive, Richmond, KY 40475. Information on jobs and subcontracting opportunities with the project may be found on the Internet at <http://www.bechtelparsonsbgcapp.com>

**Will the hiring be done locally?**

During construction, the project has set an internal goal of hiring approximately 75 percent of workers locally. Local hiring is defined as Madison County and the adjacent surrounding counties. If sufficient skilled resources cannot be obtained from this local population, the project will branch out to other locales, with priority given to Kentucky residents.

**Whom should I contact for subcontracting opportunities?**

Suppliers should register on the supplier Web site <http://supplier.bechtel.com>. For further information please log onto the project Web site at <http://www.bechtelparsonsbgcapp.com> or contact the project supplier advocate, Devon Farnstrom, at (859) 624-6201 or [dkfarnst@bechtel.com](mailto:dkfarnst@bechtel.com).



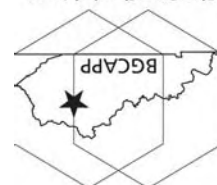
## Safety Meetings and Safety Leadership Workshops Promote Safety Culture

Instructor Dave Allen led the first group of Richmond project office employees in a recent 8-hour safety leadership workshop. His audience includes, from left to right, Leo Weitzman, Joe Wojno and Bob Rudd.

In addition, employees select topics and make presentations for fellow employees during bi-monthly safety meetings. Topics have included an emergency management overview, automobile safety, weather safety and the importance of physical fitness.



Photo by Diane Osbourne



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